



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, JUNE 19, 2017

No. 104

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 20, 2017, at 12 p.m.

Senate

MONDAY, JUNE 19, 2017

The Senate met at 4 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, our hope for years to come, so much seems to be happening in our Nation and world. Lord, we pray for those affected by the latest London terror attack, for the families of those killed aboard the USS *Fitzgerald*, for the police who were attacked in Paris, and for those recovering from last week's baseball field shooting.

Let Your peace stay with us all during these turbulent times. Surround our lawmakers with Your favor, enabling them to believe that You will empower them to persevere through every challenge, as they trust You to bring them to Your desired destination. May they not lose confidence in the power of Your everlasting arms as You continue to give them a moral and ethical resilience that will not shrink in the heat of testing.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The majority leader is recognized.

LONDON ATTACK

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, today we are learning about new attacks in Europe. I would like to start by offering the Senate's condolences to the victims and their families in London. As our allies in the United Kingdom develop a better understanding of the nature of that attack, let me again reiterate that our commitment to our friends in Europe remains very strong. We will continue to stand by you.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, on another matter, what has happened in the years since ObamaCare was imposed on our country? Year after year, it drove up costs. Year after year, it drove down choice. Year after year, it continues to literally unravel right before our eyes. It is a trend that continues today, one that will only get worse unless we act.

Just last week we got more evidence of ObamaCare's failures as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services released reports that identified a trend of Americans who had enrolled in the ObamaCare exchanges but then canceled their coverage. Often these Americans didn't even pay their first premium. Within just a couple of months of enrolling, nearly 2 million people literally dropped out of ObamaCare.

Why did so many Americans drop their coverage? The reasons shouldn't surprise anyone. The most common explanation these Americans gave for having canceled their coverage was ObamaCare's outrageous costs. These numbers underline what Republicans have been saying all along. ObamaCare is collapsing around us, and the American people are desperately searching for relief. Costs continue to shoot upward, and insurance providers are fleeing from the marketplaces across the country, leaving precious few options.

It is clear that ObamaCare just isn't working. In fact, it is not working for millions of Americans, like those living in nearly 1,400 counties—about 50 percent of all counties nationwide—who would have zero or just one insurance option on the exchanges next year. Of course, one option isn't really an option at all.

These shrinking choices and increased costs under ObamaCare are not an indication of a new pattern; they are just the latest in what has been a years-long assault on far too many families by this failed healthcare law. While this isn't a new trend, it is one that has grown increasingly more unsustainable and one that we must work to change very soon. That is why we have repeatedly called for a different approach to healthcare. That is why we are working hard to move in a different direction on healthcare today.

For months now, the entire Senate Republican conference has been active and engaged on legislation to move beyond the failures of ObamaCare and bring relief to the American people. We

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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have had numerous productive discussions on the way forward. We believe we can and must do better than ObamaCare's status quo.

Working together and listening to our constituents, we are focused on the following: stabilizing insurance markets which are collapsing under ObamaCare; freeing Americans from ObamaCare's mandates, which force them to buy insurance they don't want; improving the affordability of health insurance, which is spiking under ObamaCare; strengthening Medicaid for those who need it most; and preserving access to care for patients with preexisting conditions.

Senate Republicans will continue working because it is clear that we cannot allow Americans' healthcare to continue on its current downward trajectory, taking so many families right along with it.

The ObamaCare status quo is simply unsustainable. The American people deserve relief, and we will keep working to provide it.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote on confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 108 occur at 11 a.m. tomorrow morning, with the pending cloture motions ripening after disposition of the Long nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask to speak under leaders' time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

CONDITION OF REPRESENTATIVE SCALISE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, before I begin, I want to express how

glad we all are to hear that Representative SCALISE is doing better. Over the weekend, his condition changed from critical to serious. It seems he has a ways to go, but we are all very happy to hear that the signs are more positive and moving in the right direction.

USS "FITZGERALD" TRAGEDY

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I would also like to express my heartfelt condolences to the families of the seven U.S. Navy sailors who were lost in the crash of the USS *Fitzgerald*. The loss of these seven men in peacetime, in such a bizarre and rare accident, is nothing short of a tragedy. I expect the Navy will conduct a thorough and full investigation to figure out what went wrong and hold all responsible parties accountable. For now, our prayers are with the families of the seven sailors who lost their lives in service to this great country.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on healthcare, we are only 2 weeks away from the July 4th recess, and my friends on the other side say we are going to vote on a healthcare bill before the break. Democrats still have not seen the bill. The Republican Health and Human Services Secretary has not seen the bill. The American people have not seen the bill. I am sure many Republican Senators have not seen the bill either. The White House spokesman could not even say if the President has seen the bill.

This is a bill that would likely reorder one-sixth of the American economy and have life-and-death consequences for millions of Americans. It is being discussed in secret, with no committee hearings, no debate, no amendments, no input from the minority. This is the most glaring departure from normal legislative procedure that I have ever seen. My friend the majority leader used to sing the praises of regular order and wax poetic about the wisdom of the committee process and an open amendment process.

Republicans criticized Democrats vehemently for passing the Affordable Care Act with only Democratic votes, and that is after we accepted dozens of Republican amendments during a robust hearing process. Now that the shoe is on the other foot and Republicans are in charge, all of those concerns and criticisms have disappeared. No committee process, no hearings, nothing—quite the opposite of what they called for 5 years ago. What gall.

Why are my Republican friends engaging in this farce of a legislative process? Why are Republicans willing to engage in such blatant hypocrisy, contradicting all of the things they have said about good procedure in the Senate? What are they afraid of? There is only one reason Republicans are doing this: They are ashamed of their bill. The Republicans are writing their

healthcare bill under the cover of darkness because they are ashamed of it, plain and simple. They are ashamed that the bill will likely cause millions to lose their healthcare insurance. They are ashamed because it will increase costs for older and sicker Americans—all to pass along a big, fat tax break to the wealthiest among us, the folks who need it the least. No wonder they do not want to show anyone the bill. They are ashamed of it.

This radical departure from normal procedure on a bill of such consequence leaves the Senate minority little choice but to depart from normal procedure as well. Starting this evening, Democrats will begin objecting to all unanimous consent requests in the Senate, save for honorary resolutions. We will seek, in as many ways as we can, as many times as we can, to refer the House-passed healthcare bill to committee, where it can be vetted, debated, and amended in the open for the American people to see, as is their right.

Tonight, Democrats will hold the floor late into the evening in a series of speeches to highlight just how unprecedented this process is. If Republicans are not going to allow debate on their bill on the floor or in committee, Democrats will make opportunities to debate.

These are merely the first steps we are prepared to take in order to shine a light on the shameful TrumpCare bill and reveal to the public the GOP's backroom deal-making.

Of course there is another way. On Friday, I sent a letter to my friend the majority leader requesting that we hold an all-Senators meeting in the Old Senate Chamber to discuss a bipartisan way forward on healthcare. We should all share common goals—improving the healthcare system by lowering costs, raising the quality of care, and stabilizing the marketplaces. Let's sit down together, all 100 of us, and talk about how we can achieve those results together.

That option, I say to the Republican leader, is on the table, and I hope he will not refuse it, but if Republicans will not relent and debate their healthcare bill in the open for the American people to see, they should not expect business as usual in the Senate.

SPECIAL COUNSEL MUELLER

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, finally, on another matter entirely, I continue to be alarmed by the wave of criticism from the far right of Special Counsel Robert Mueller. It seems obvious that, because Mr. Mueller—one of the most respected and trusted men in Washington—is in charge of investigating Russian interference in our elections and any other issues that arise out of that investigation, the far-right, special interest partisans have set out on a despicable campaign to smear his character and muddy the waters of his investigation.